



Department of  
Education &  
Science

Elizabeth House York Road London SE17PH

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# STATISTICAL BULLETIN

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## ENGLISH SCHOOL LEAVERS 1982-83

This bulletin presents statistics of the examination achievements and the intended destinations of those who left English secondary schools during the 1982-83 academic year. Particular attention is given to recent trends in these data. The results are derived from the annual school leavers sample survey which collects information from all secondary schools in England (excluding special schools) of the number, by sex and age, of school leavers and, for an approximate 10 per cent sample of these leavers, further data on their academic achievements and intended destination. As a result of this method of data collection many of the analyses are subject to sampling error.

### Summary of main results

The total number of English school leavers rose by 14,400 to 765,500 in 1982-83 compared with the previous year (table 1).

The increase in the total number of school leavers was due to a rise in the number of leavers across all age groups with more, proportionately, from the first year sixth form and above<sup>1</sup>. As a proportion of the age group, 67.4 per cent of pupils left school at the completion of five years secondary education, an increase of one and a half percentage points compared with 1981-82 (table 1).

There was a decrease of just under one percentage point compared with 1981-82 in the proportion of leavers who intended to go on to some form of full-time further education immediately after leaving school. Similar decreases occurred for boys and girls. The proportion of girls intending to directly pursue full-time further education remained 9 percentage points above that for boys (table 2).

The proportion of leavers with no graded results at CSE/GCE O level continued to fall; by one percentage point to 9.6 per cent in 1982-83 compared with the previous year. The raising of the school leaving age in 1971-72 obliged all secondary pupils to remain at school during the year in which examinations are commonly taken. Since 1971-72 the overall proportion of leavers with no graded results has been reduced by more than three quarters (table 3).

In 1982-83 the number of leavers with two or more A level passes expressed as a proportion of the 17 year old age group increased by a quarter percentage point to 13.4 per cent; there has been an increase of slightly more than one percentage point since 1971-72 (table 11).

Just under 14.5 per cent of school leavers from the maintained sector in 1982-83 had obtained at least one A level pass and a further 38 per cent not having an A level pass had obtained at least one higher grade O level/CSE result. Similarly, 63 per cent of school leavers from independent schools had achieved at least one A level and an additional 31 per cent at least one higher grade O level/CSE pass. Within the maintained sector, the proportions of school leavers from grammar schools achieving these levels of academic qualifications were broadly similar to those of leavers from independent schools (table 6).

Over one quarter of school leavers from grammar schools intended to pursue a degree course as compared with just under one third of school leavers from independent schools (table 6).

1. Leavers at age 16 or above at the previous August 31.



Eighty-seven per cent of school leavers in 1982-83 had attempted English at O level or at CSE and 82 per cent had attempted mathematics (table 7).

Mathematics and English were the subjects for which school leavers had most passes at A level. With the exception of English, both physics and chemistry had greater numbers of A level passes than any of the arts or social science subjects.

### When pupils leave

Table 1 shows that in 1982-83 the proportion of pupils leaving school in England during the year in which they reached the minimum school leaving age increased by just over 1.5 percentage points compared with 1981-82. This is a reversal of the previous trend toward increased staying on after the minimum school leaving age. In 1982-83 however there continued to be marked increases in the proportions of the appropriate age groups leaving school during the first and subsequent year sixth forms — a consequence of school pupil staying-on decisions of preceding years.

**Table 1 School leavers in England  
Percentage of each age group leaving school and percentage of leavers by term of leaving**

	1971-72	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1982-83 (000s)
Leavers by age at previous 31 August as percentage of the age group <sup>1</sup>						
14	35.5	.	.	.	.	.
15	31.3	68.9	66.1	65.8	67.4	514.5
16	8.4	9.8	9.7	11.5	12.2	94.3
17 and over <sup>2</sup>	17.9	18.0	18.3	19.3	19.8	156.8
Leavers in each term as percentage of all leavers						
Autumn	3.5	2.1	1.9	2.0	2.1	15.8
Spring	14.1	6.7	6.4	6.1	6.2	47.1
Summer	82.4	91.2	91.6	91.9	91.7	702.3
Total leavers (000s)	606.6	750.7	734.0	751.1	765.5	765.5

1 Derived from GAD estimates of the population.

2 Leavers aged 17 or over as a percentage of the 17 year old age group.

There was little change in the proportions of pupils leaving school during each of the three school terms. Approximately 92 per cent of school leavers do so during the summer term.

### Destinations on leaving school

The intended destinations of school leavers are presented in table 2.

The table shows that in 1982-83 there were broadly similar decreases in the proportions of both boys and girls intending to pursue full-time further and higher education courses compared with the previous year. These decreases follow the significant growth in the proportions that occurred up to 1981-82. Twenty three per cent of boys leaving school in 1982-83 intended to go on to full-time education compared with nearly 32 per cent of girls.

Considerable differences exist in the destinations of boys and girls on leaving school. As a proportion of the number of school leavers, boys continued to show a greater propensity to follow degree courses than girls, but over recent years the proportion of girls doing so has risen more rapidly than that of boys. Although, overall, there were only small changes in 1982-83 in the numbers of boys and girls

**Table 2 School leavers in England  
Percentage of leavers by intended destination**

	1971-72	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83	1982-83 (000s)
<b>Boys</b>						
Destination						
All full-time further education	19.1	17.8	22.2	23.7	23.0	89.7
Degree courses	8.5	8.6	9.3	9.1	8.5	33.1
Teacher training courses	1.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.4
GCE A level courses	1.5	2.0	2.9	3.0	3.3	12.7
GCE O level courses	1.8	1.4	1.8	1.7	1.6	6.1
Secretarial courses	—	—	—	—	—	0.1
Other professional and vocational courses	6.0	5.6	8.0	9.7	9.6	37.3
Available for employment <sup>1</sup>	71.2	73.5	67.8	65.5	65.5	255.5
Not known	9.7	8.7	10.0	10.8	11.5	44.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	389.9
Total leavers (000s)	312.6	383.9	374.4	382.2	389.9	389.9
<b>Girls</b>						
Destination						
All full-time further education	24.0	27.2	32.0	32.8	31.8	119.4
Degree courses	4.6	6.4	6.7	6.9	6.5	24.6
Teacher training courses	5.0	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	2.4
GCE A level courses	1.4	2.7	3.4	3.7	3.6	13.4
GCE O level courses	1.3	1.7	2.3	1.9	2.0	7.4
Secretarial courses	4.9	5.0	5.2	4.7	4.3	16.0
Other professional and vocational courses	6.9	10.8	13.7	14.9	14.8	55.6
Available for employment <sup>1</sup>	68.6	64.2	58.4	56.6	56.9	213.8
Not known	7.3	8.6	9.7	10.6	11.3	42.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	375.6
Total leavers (000s)	294.0	366.8	359.5	368.9	375.6	375.6

1 Including leavers going to temporary employment pending entry into full-time further education.

intending to directly pursue full-time education on leaving school as compared with 1981-82, there were marked decreases in the proportions intending to do so aged 16 and over. These include a decrease in the propensity of boys aged 17 and over intending to read for degrees (partially offset by an increase in the proportion leaving for A level courses) and, to a slightly lesser extent, for girls in this category.

### Recent trends in examination achievements before leaving school

There was a marginal increase to 17.1 per cent in the proportion of school leavers with one or more A level passes in 1982-83 as evidenced in table 3. This follows a rise of half a percentage point in 1981-82 following a percentage point increase in 1980-81.

Because these comparisons will be affected by changes from year to year in the age distribution of leavers, the number of leavers with A level passes is conveniently expressed as a percentage of the 17 year old age group. On such a basis there was an increase between the latest two years of one third of a percentage point to 16.6 per cent (table 9).

Although most of the 16-18 age group who study for A levels do so at school, a significant proportion pursue these studies in colleges of further education. Students under 19 who passed one



**Table 3 School leavers in England**  
Percentage with different levels of qualification

	1971-72	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83		
					Boys	Girls	Total
Total leavers (000s)	606.6	750.7	734.0	751.1	389.9	375.6	765.5
Examinations attempted							
No examination	42.4	11.0	10.4	9.7	10.2	7.1	8.7
CSE but not GCE	14.7	30.9	30.7	29.5	29.7	26.9	28.3
GCE O but not A level	24.4	40.5	40.5	41.6	40.6	46.7	43.6
GCE A level	18.5	17.5	18.5	19.3	19.6	19.2	19.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Examination achievements							
1 or more A levels	16.2	15.6	16.5	17.0	17.4	16.9	17.1
No A level passes but 5 or more higher <sup>1</sup> grades in O levels/CSE	8.4	9.4	9.6	10.1	9.2	11.4	10.3
1-4 higher <sup>1</sup> grades	19.3	27.0	26.6	26.7	25.1	29.7	27.4
1 or more other <sup>2</sup> grades	13.0	35.8	35.9	35.5	37.0	34.2	35.6
Total with a graded result	57.0	87.8	88.6	89.4	88.7	92.1	90.4
Total with no graded result	43.0	12.2	11.4	10.6	11.3	7.9	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1 For 1971-72, O level pass, CSE grade 1; from 1979-80, O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

2 For 1971-72, CSE grades 2-5; from 1979-80, O level grades D,E, CSE grades 2-5.

or more A levels in college (and who did not do so at school) amount to between two and three per cent of the 17 year old population. If these are added to school leavers with A level qualifications about 19 per cent of the 17 year old age group achieved one or more A level passes in 1982-83.

The major change in school leavers academic attainments was again the decrease in the proportion of leavers with no graded qualifications. In 1982-83 just over 9.5 per cent of leavers fell in this category, 8 per cent of girls but slightly above 11 per cent of boys.

There were slight increases in 1982-83 in the percentage of school leavers without an A level pass but who achieved higher or other<sup>1</sup> grades at O level or CSE. Over the last decade the proportions gaining 1-4 higher grades and also those with one or more other grades have changed markedly.

### How examination achievements and destinations vary with age

The school leaver's age at the beginning of the academic year roughly equates to his or her school year group, so that leavers in 1982-83 aged 15 on 31 August 1982 are assumed to have left from the fifth form, those aged 16 from the first year sixth and so on. Table 4 indicates that just over 90 per cent of second year sixth leavers had attempted A level examinations whilst almost all leavers who had not attempted any examination were from the fifth form. Nearly 85 per cent of the fifth form leavers had attempted CSE, and almost half the leavers had attempted at least one O level. Girl leavers in this age group were more likely to sit O levels than boys. Very few fifth form leavers attempted O level without attempting any CSE examinations. Seven per cent of boys leaving from the fifth form and 9 per cent of girls had 5 or more higher grade O level/CSE passes. The table also shows the progression of older boy leavers (who are in general more qualified) to go on to some form

1. O level passes grades A to C and CSE grade 1 are referred to throughout the text as 'higher' grades, and the remaining graded results as 'other' grades.

**Table 4 School leavers in England, 1982-83**  
Qualifications and destinations by age at previous 31 August

	Percentages							
	Boys				Girls			
	15	16	17 and over	Total	15	16	17 and over	Total
Total leavers (000s)	267.4	42.9	79.7	389.9	247.1	51.4	77.1	375.6
Examinations attempted								
A level only	—	0.1	0.8	0.2	—	0.1	1.0	0.2
A and O levels but not CSE	0.1	5.0	47.5	10.3	0.1	3.6	42.6	9.3
A level and CSE but not O level	—	0.1	0.1	—	—	—	0.2	0.1
O and A levels and CSE	0.1	2.4	42.9	9.1	0.1	2.4	45.3	9.7
O level only	2.6	8.0	1.8	3.0	3.0	6.8	1.0	3.1
O level and CSE only	42.5	66.4	5.7	37.6	49.3	68.7	8.3	43.5
CSE only	40.6	15.1	0.6	29.7	37.3	15.8	1.1	27.0
No CSE or GCE examinations	14.1	2.9	0.6	10.2	10.2	2.6	0.5	7.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Examination achievements								
3 or more A level passes	—	4.2	48.2	10.3	—	3.1	40.5	8.8
2 A level passes	—	1.4	18.7	4.0	—	1.0	22.0	4.6
1 A level pass	0.1	1.2	14.0	3.0	0.1	1.4	15.8	3.5
At least 1 A level pass	0.1	6.8	80.9	17.4	0.1	5.5	78.3	16.9
No A level passes, but 5 or more higher <sup>1</sup> grade O level or CSE results	7.3	19.1	10.4	9.2	9.3	21.3	11.3	11.4
1-4 higher <sup>1</sup> grades	27.3	46.1	6.5	25.1	33.1	46.2	7.7	29.7
1 or more other <sup>2</sup> grades	49.6	24.7	1.4	37.0	46.3	24.1	2.1	34.2
No graded result	15.7	3.3	0.8	11.3	11.2	2.9	0.6	7.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Destinations								
All full-time further education	13.1	22.4	56.7	23.0	26.4	23.9	54.4	31.8
Degree courses	—	2.7	40.0	8.5	—	1.8	30.6	6.6
Teacher training courses	—	0.1	0.5	0.1	—	—	3.1	0.7
GCE A level courses	2.5	3.6	5.6	3.2	3.4	2.8	4.7	3.6
GCE O level courses	1.9	2.1	0.3	1.6	2.6	1.5	0.4	2.0
Secretarial courses	—	0.1	—	—	4.8	4.1	2.7	4.3
Other professional and vocational courses	8.7	13.9	10.3	9.6	15.6	13.7	12.9	14.8
Available for employment <sup>3</sup>	75.1	64.6	34.0	65.5	61.5	63.8	37.5	56.9
Not known	11.9	13.0	9.4	11.5	12.1	12.4	8.1	11.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

2 O level grades D,E, CSE grades 2-5.

3 Including temporary employment pending entry into full-time further education.

of full-time further education. Fifth form girl leavers were more than twice as likely to intend to pursue full-time further education as were their male equivalents although there was little sex difference for older leavers.

### How entry to further education varied with examination achievements

Table 5 illustrates the association between school leavers' qualifications and their intended destinations.

Ninety-eight per cent of leavers with no graded results in 1982-83 were available for employment, the remainder entering full-time vocational courses. In contrast 77 per cent of those with 3 or more A levels intended to continue full-time study, though this proportion was a little below the corresponding level for leavers in 1971-72. Of those without higher grade passes at O level/CSE in



1982-83 but with at least one lower grade pass, 88 per cent were available for employment, and only 2 per cent intended to continue GCE O level studies. The remainder intended to pursue vocational courses.

**Table 5 School leavers in England, 1982-83**  
Intended destination by qualification achieved  
Percentage of leavers within each level of achievement

	With A level passes			With no A level passes			
	3 or more	2	1	5 or more higher <sup>1</sup> grade O level or CSE results	1-4 higher <sup>1</sup> grades	1 or more other <sup>2</sup> grades	No graded result
All leavers (000s)	73.3	33.0	24.9	78.8	209.4	272.6	73.6
Destination							
Full-time further education							
Degree courses	66	27	1	—	—	—	—
Teacher training courses	2	5	—	—	—	—	—
GCE A level courses	2	5	10	17	3	—	—
GCE O level courses	—	—	—	1	4	2	—
Other courses	7	19	24	22	21	11	1
Total full-time further education	77	55	36	40	28	12	2
Available for employment <sup>3</sup>	23	45	64	60	72	88	98
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

1 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

2 O level grades D,E, CSE grades 2-5.

3 Including temporary employment pending entry into full-time further education and destinations not known.

### Examination achievements and destinations by type of school

The qualifications and destinations of school leavers by type of school are shown in table 6. Information is collected from the last school attended, which may not be the same school or indeed be of the same school type as the school(s) covering the major part of the pupil's secondary education. This implies that it is not possible to compare the achievements of different school systems by simple addition of school leavers survey data for individual school types and hence only limited comparisons are given below.

Approximately 68 per cent of leavers with one or more A level passes completed their study in comprehensive schools in 1982-83; the corresponding proportion for independent schools was 21 per cent. Within comprehensive schools the proportion of leavers (not shown in the table) with at least one A level from sixth form colleges was 52 per cent, four and a half percentage points less than for grammar school leavers. Just over 4.5 per cent of leavers from other maintained secondary schools (mainly secondary modern schools) achieved one or more A levels. The corresponding proportion for independent schools was 63 per cent.

The proportions of leavers in 1982-83 who had achieved at least one higher grade pass at O level or CSE but who had no A level passes were broadly similar across the types of maintained school, ranging from 38 per cent in comprehensive schools to 40 per cent in grammar schools. The corresponding proportion for independent schools was 31 per cent. The proportion of leavers who achieved no graded result in 1982-83 was just over 10 per cent in comprehensive schools, compared with less than one per cent in grammar schools and just under two per cent in independent schools.

One quarter of all maintained school leavers and almost two thirds of independent school leavers intended to go on to some form of further or higher education. Compared with 1981-82 there were decreases in the proportion of leavers from independent schools going on to degree courses (33 per cent compared with 36 per cent) slightly offset by a percentage point increase in those intending to follow professional and vocational courses. The corresponding proportions for comprehensive schools were 5.6 per cent and 13.6 per cent; leavers from comprehensive schools accounted for 63.7 per cent of all leavers proceeding to degree courses, an increase of 1.3 percentage points over the previous year. The proportions of grammar, independent and comprehensive school leavers who went on to A level courses in further education establishments were 6.4, 10.9 and 2.8 per cent respectively. There were increases for all school types in the proportion of leavers for whom the intended destination was unknown.

**Table 6 School leavers in England, 1982-83**  
Qualifications and intended destinations by type of school

	Maintained schools				Independent schools	All schools
	Comprehensive	Grammar	Other secondary	All maintained		
Total leavers (000s)	652.1	21.3	48.4	721.8	43.7	765.5
Examination achievements						
At least 1 A level pass	13.7	56.8	4.5	14.4	63.1	17.1
No A level pass, but 5 or more higher <sup>1</sup> grade O level or CSE results	9.8	21.6	7.7	10.0	14.6	10.3
1-4 higher <sup>1</sup> grades	28.2	18.2	30.3	28.0	16.5	27.4
1 or more other <sup>2</sup> grades	38.0	2.8	46.6	37.5	4.0	35.6
No graded result	10.3	0.6	10.9	10.1	1.8	9.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Destinations						
All full-time further education	24.1	53.9	24.7	25.0	64.9	27.3
Degree courses	5.6	28.0	1.4	6.0	32.8	7.5
Teacher training courses	0.3	1.3	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4
GCE A level courses	2.8	6.4	2.9	2.9	10.9	3.4
GCE O level courses	1.7	0.6	3.1	1.7	2.2	1.8
Other courses	13.6	17.6	17.2	14.0	18.4	14.2
Available for employment <sup>3</sup>	64.2	38.4	64.5	63.5	25.5	61.3
Not known	11.7	7.7	10.8	11.5	9.6	11.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

1 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

2 O level grades D,E, CSE grades 2-5.

3 Including temporary employment pending entry into full-time further education.

Table 7 shows the attempts and best results obtained for selected subjects and in any subject at GCE O level or CSE examinations. Sixty per cent of boys and 66 per cent of girls attempted at least one O level. A further 30 per cent of boys and 27 per cent of girls attempted CSE, but not O level; overall 90 per cent of boys and 93 per cent of girls had attempted at least one O level or CSE examination. Eighty-nine per cent of boys had at least one graded pass and 92 per cent of girls, 51 per cent and 58 per cent respectively having at least one higher grade pass. The table shows the relative propensities of pupils to have taken O level/CSE examinations in the major subjects. Mathematics and English continue to be the subjects which are attempted the most (and passed most). The table also indicates the relationships between examination attempts and best results.



**Table 7 School leavers in England, 1982-83**  
**GCE ordinary level and CSE attempts and best graded results<sup>1</sup> for selected subjects**  
**Percentage of leavers**

	Attempts			Best results		
	O level <sup>2</sup>	CSE but not O level	Total	Higher <sup>3</sup> grade pass	Other <sup>4</sup> grade	Total
<b>Boys</b>						
Any subject (000s)	233.9	115.8	349.7	200.8	144.5	345.3
Any subject	60	30	90	51	37	89
English	46	38	84	34	47	81
Mathematics	36	45	81	32	42	74
Physics	29	23	52	22	28	49
Chemistry	20	12	32	15	14	29
Biological sciences	17	12	29	13	14	27
Craft, design, technology and other science	21	39	60	18	39	57
French	15	11	26	11	13	23
History	18	18	36	14	18	32
Geography	25	24	50	19	27	46
Creative arts	15	15	30	11	18	28
Commercial and domestic studies	4	8	11	3	8	10
<b>Girls</b>						
Any subject (000s)	246.5	101.5	348.0	216.5	128.6	345.0
Any subject	66	27	93	58	34	92
English	56	34	89	45	42	87
Mathematics	33	51	83	27	48	75
Physics	12	6	18	8	9	17
Chemistry	14	10	23	10	11	21
Biological sciences	29	29	58	20	33	53
Craft, design, technology and other science	4	12	16	3	11	15
French	23	20	43	19	22	41
History	21	20	41	16	21	37
Geography	21	18	39	15	21	36
Creative arts	21	15	36	17	18	35
Commercial and domestic studies	20	35	55	17	35	52

1 Excluding O level passes awarded on A level papers.

2 Including those who attempted CSE in the same subject and those who entered for the 16+ CSE/GCE joint feasibility examinations.

3 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

4 O level grades D,E, CSE grades 2-5.

The comparisons between 1971-72 and 1982-83 shown in table 8 indicate the increased proportions of school leavers, both boys and girls, that obtained at least one higher grade pass at O level/CSE. The increase amounts to just over 8 percentage points for boys and 13.5 percentage points for girls. The largest proportionate increases for boys were in commercial and domestic studies, biology, physics and chemistry and for girls in chemistry, physics and general studies followed by mathematics. There were falls in the percentage of boys holding a higher grade O level/CSE pass in French and the proportion of girls with a higher grade in CDT.

**Table 8 School leavers in England**  
**Leavers with higher<sup>1</sup> grade passes at O level or CSE in selected subjects**  
**Percentage of all leavers**

	1971-72			1982-83			Percentage change 1971-72 to 1982-83		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Any subject	43.3	44.1	43.7	51.5	57.6	54.5	+19	+31	+25
English	30.4	36.8	33.5	33.5	45.0	39.1	+10	+22	+17
Mathematics	27.2	19.0	23.2	31.9	26.9	29.5	+17	+42	+27
Physics	15.7	4.0	10.0	21.5	8.4	15.1	+37	+110	+51
Chemistry	11.5	4.7	8.2	15.2	9.9	12.6	+32	+111	+54
Biological sciences	9.1	17.1	13.0	12.7	19.7	16.1	+40	+15	+24
Craft, design, technology and other science	17.0	3.4	10.4	18.2	3.2	10.9	+7	-6	+5
French	12.4	17.6	14.9	10.7	18.9	14.7	-14	+7	-1
History	12.8	14.6	13.7	14.1	16.1	15.1	+10	+10	+10
Geography	17.0	14.1	15.6	18.6	14.6	16.6	+9	+4	+6
Creative arts	9.0	13.8	11.3	10.7	16.8	13.7	+19	+22	+21
Commercial and domestic studies	0.9	13.9	7.2	2.7	17.3	9.9	+200	+24	+38
General studies	2.4	2.0	2.2	2.7	2.9	2.8	+13	+45	+27

1 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

#### Recent trends in A level achievements and subjects passed

The subjects attempted and the results achieved by leavers who had passes in A level examinations are shown in tables 9, 10 and 11. Half of the school leavers who had attempted A levels in 1982-83 achieved three or more passes and a further 22 per cent achieved two passes, approximately three quarters of a percentage point less and half a percentage point more respectively than in 1981-82. However, when expressed as a percentage of the 17 year old age group, both groups showed small increases. Leavers with one A level pass showed little change on either base.

**Table 9 School leavers in England**  
**Leavers with A level qualifications**

	1971-72	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
<b>With 3 or more passes</b>					
Number (000s)	50.0	65.1	68.6	72.7	73.3
As percentage of those attempting A levels	44.6	49.5	50.6	50.1	49.3
As percentage of the 17 year old age group <sup>1</sup>	7.9	8.6	8.9	9.2	9.3
<b>With 2 passes</b>					
Number (000s)	27.2	29.8	30.2	31.3	33.0
As percentage of those attempting A levels	24.3	22.6	22.3	21.6	22.2
As percentage of the 17 year old age group <sup>1</sup>	4.3	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.2
<b>With 1 pass</b>					
Number (000s)	21.3	22.1	22.0	24.0	24.9
As percentage of those attempting A levels	19.0	16.7	16.2	16.6	16.7
As percentage of the 17 year old age group <sup>1</sup>	3.4	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1
<b>With 1 or more passes</b>					
Number (000s)	98.5	117.0	120.8	127.9	131.2
As percentage of those attempting A levels	87.9	88.9	89.2	88.2	88.3
As percentage of the 17 year old age group <sup>1</sup>	15.5	15.5	15.7	16.3	16.6

1 Derived from GAD estimates of the population.



**Table 10 School leavers in England**  
Leavers with A level passes in selected subjects  
Percentage of the 17 year old age group<sup>1</sup>

	1971-72			1982-83			Percentage change 1971-72 to 1982-83		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Any subject	16.6	14.4	15.5	16.7	16.5	16.6	+1	+15	+7
English	3.6	6.9	5.2	2.8	6.5	4.6	-22	-6	-12
Mathematics	6.1	1.9	4.1	7.1	3.5	5.3	+16	+84	+29
Physics	5.7	1.4	3.6	6.0	1.8	4.0	+5	+29	+11
Chemistry	4.0	1.6	2.8	4.5	2.7	3.7	+13	+69	+32
Biological sciences	2.0	2.4	2.2	2.4	3.7	3.1	+20	+54	+41
Craft, design, technology and other science	1.3	0.1	0.8	1.1	0.3	0.7	-15	+200	-12
French	1.4	3.1	2.2	1.1	3.0	2.0	-21	-3	-9
History	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.0	3.2	3.1	-9	-9	-9
Geography	3.2	2.6	2.9	3.2	2.4	2.8	-	-8	-3
Creative arts	1.3	2.2	1.8	1.3	2.5	1.9	-	+14	+6
Commercial and domestic studies	-	0.7	0.4	0.3	1.0	0.6	-	+43	+50
General studies	2.7	1.4	2.1	3.9	3.0	3.5	+44	+114	+67

<sup>1</sup> Derived from GAD estimates of the population.

**Table 11 School leavers in England with 2 or more A level passes**  
Subject specialisation

	Percentages				
	1971-72	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
Total leavers (000s)	606.6	750.7	734.0	751.1	765.5
All leavers with 2 or more A level passes (000s)	77.2	95.0	98.8	103.9	106.3
As percentage of the 17 year old population <sup>1</sup>	12.2	12.6	12.8	13.2	13.4
Subject specialisation— percentage of leavers					
Mathematics					
With other sciences only <sup>2</sup>	23.4	21.9	22.4	24.4	23.4
With other subjects <sup>3</sup>	8.4	14.0	14.0	13.3	14.4
Total mathematics	31.8	35.9	36.4	37.7	37.8
Other sciences only	10.2	9.9	10.1	9.1	9.2
Other sciences with arts or social sciences	7.4	10.4	10.0	10.5	10.2
Social science only	3.2	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.9
Arts only	26.7	21.1	20.6	19.5	19.4
Social science and arts	20.5	18.8	19.4	19.5	19.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

<sup>1</sup> Derived from GAD estimates of the population.

<sup>2</sup> Including the small percentage of leavers with passes in mathematics subjects only.

<sup>3</sup> Including leavers with passes in mathematics, science and other subjects.

The proportion of the age group obtaining an A level pass in any subject increased between 1971-72 and 1982-83, the increase being attributable entirely to an increased proportion of girls so qualifying. Over this period the gap between the proportion of boys and girls has almost disappeared. For both boys and girls proportionate increases in science subjects have been offset — for girls only partially offset — by decreases in languages and humanities subjects. Table 11 displays the trends in greater detail amongst those obtaining 2 or more A level passes.

### Proportions staying on at school into the sixth form

The increase in the proportion leaving school from the fifth form in 1982-83 reversed the trend observed over previous years. Some 30 per cent of the age group reaching school leaving age in 1977-78 remained at school compared with 32.6 per cent in 1982-83. Table 12 shows how the proportions changed for subsequent age groups.

**Table 12 School leavers in England**  
Trends in staying on at school and entry into full-time further education

	Percentages					
	Academic year in which minimum school leaving age reached					
	1977-78	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81	1981-82	1982-83
Percentage leaving school by end of academic year in which minimum school leaving age reached	69.5	69.4	68.9	66.1	65.9	67.4
Percentage staying on at school for						
0-1 years	9.6	9.8	9.7	11.5	12.2	.
1-2 years	16.0	16.1	16.9	17.4	.	.
2-3 years	2.3	2.6	2.6	.	.	.
Percentage proceeding to full-time further education after leaving school	22.0	22.8	23.8	.	.	.

For those recent age groups that have completed their schooling the proportion planning to proceed to full-time education on leaving school is also shown as rising to just under one quarter for the 1979-80 age group.

The percentage of the 1980-81 age group leaving school from the fifth form declined sharply by 3 percentage points compared with the 1979-80 age group, indicating a substantial increase in staying on for further study. Staying-on by the 1981-82 age group showed a further increase but of much smaller size. Some two thirds of the increased proportion of the 1980-81 age group who had stayed on into 1981-82 remained at school for one year only. 11.4 per cent of the age group left after one year in the sixth form compared with under 10 per cent a year earlier.

Table 13 shows the broad academic attainments of school leavers belonging to the 1979-80 and 1980-81 minimum school leaving age groups at ages 15, 16 and 17 and cumulatively. The data suggest that those pupils who, additionally, stayed on at school raised their average level of qualifications. This improvement is reflected in both the 0.4 per cent increase in the proportion of the age group who gained one or more A levels, and in the fall of nearly one per cent in the proportion who left school with no graded results.



**Table 13 School leavers in England  
Leavers who reached the minimum school leaving age in 1979-80 and 1980-81**

Examination achievements as percentage of leavers	Leavers during the academic years								Percentages
	At age 15		At age 16		At age 17		At ages 15, 16 and 17		
	1979-80	1980-81	1980-81	1981-82	1981-82	1982-83	1979-80, 1980-81, 1981-82	1980-81, 1981-82, 1982-83	
One or more A level passes	—	0.1	7.0	5.9	80.4	79.6	16.6	17.1	
No A level passes but higher <sup>1</sup> grade passes at O level and CSE	37.2	36.9	68.7	65.3	17.2	17.9	36.3	36.4	
No A level or higher <sup>1</sup> grade passes but passes in other <sup>2</sup> grades at O level and CSE	46.4	47.4	21.4	25.5	1.7	1.7	35.1	35.5	
No graded results	16.4	15.5	2.9	3.3	0.7	0.7	11.9	11.1	
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	
Examination achievements as percentage of the year group <sup>3</sup>									
One or more A level passes	—	0.1	0.7	0.7	15.5	15.8	16.3	16.7	
No A level passes but higher <sup>1</sup> grade passes at O level and CSE	25.6	24.4	6.6	7.5	3.3	3.5	35.6	35.5	
No A level or higher <sup>1</sup> grade passes but passes in other <sup>2</sup> grades at O level and CSE	32.0	31.3	2.1	2.9	0.3	0.3	34.4	34.6	
No graded results	11.3	10.3	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.1	11.7	10.8	
Total	68.9	66.1	9.7	11.4	19.2	19.8	98.0	97.6	

1 O level grades A-C, CSE grade 1.

2 O level grades D, E, CSE grades 2-5.

3 Derived from GAD estimates of the population.

#### Further information

Further copies of this bulletin and of earlier issues can be obtained from the Department's Statistics Branch, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH (Tel 01-928 9222 Ext 2776).

Enquiries about this bulletin and advice about statistics of school leavers should be addressed to Statistics Branch, Department of Education and Science, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH (Tel 01-928 9222 Ext 2361). Press enquiries should be made to the Department's Press Office at the same address (Ext 3501-7). A list of tabulations which can be made available on payment of a charge may be obtained from Statistics Branch, Room 337, Department of Education and Science, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9BG (Tel 0325 60155 Ext 208).

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The DES publishes annually a 'Digest of Statistics' of education in England, priced £2. The main features of the publication are its handy size, easy reference and that it contains the latest figures available (usually 1982-83 in the current edition) in around 30 simple tables, showing time series of the most sought after statistics in educational finance, school pupils and teachers, school leavers, 16-19 year olds, further and higher education, and overseas students. Enquiries relating to the digest should be directed to the DES Statistics Branch (Tel 01-928 9222 Extn 2157) but orders for copies of the current edition of the 'Digest of Statistics' (published December 1983) should be sent to Room 337, Department of Education and Science, Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road, Darlington DL3 9DG.



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